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CHURCHILL DOWNS SPRING MEET SET TO CLOSE WITH A BANG

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, June 23, 2019) – The 38-day Spring Meet at Churchill Downs is set to close next week with a stellar eight-race program for **Twilight Thursday presented by Blue Moon**, a special 11-race program on Friday and a 12-race extravaganza on closing day Saturday, including a trio of stakes events.

“We’ve been so appreciative for all of our owners, trainers and handicappers for supporting this year’s Spring Meet,” said **Ben Huffman**, Churchill Downs’ Vice President of Racing. “With the boosted purse structure from **Derby City Gaming**, the support for our racing has been stronger than ever. We wish all of our owners, trainers and handicappers the best of luck this summer and we’re looking forward to the September Meet, which is just around the corner.”

Thursday’s eight-race program attracted 81 horses in the body with 16 also-eligibles for an average of slightly more than 10 horses per race. The program features four allowance races including the featured contest in Race 2, a \$104,000 conditioned allowance that attracted the return multiple graded stakes winner **Mr. Misunderstood**.

Friday’s 11-race card, which is slated to be drawn late Sunday morning, has three allowance contests and two maiden special weight events.

Closing day Saturday features a trio of stakes events – the \$125,000 Bashford Manor (Grade III), \$125,000 Debutante (Listed) and \$120,000-added Kelly’s Landing Overnight Stakes. Along with the triad of stakes contests, there are five allowance races listed in the condition book and two maiden special weight contests. Entries for Saturday’s program will be drawn Wednesday.

Entering Sunday’s 10-race program at Churchill Downs, perennial leading rider **Corey Lanerie** and Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** are poised to secure the titles in their respective standings. Lanerie, a 16-time Churchill Downs riding champion, held a 37-28 win lead over **Miguel Mena** while Asmussen, a record 20-time local leading trainer, had a 25-15 lead over **Eddie Kenneally**.

Asmussen joined **Dale Romans** (728) and **Bill Mott** (715) in a very select group to reach the 700-win milestone at Churchill Downs on Saturday after 5-year-old gelding **Rocky Tough** rallied to win the ninth race. In the next race, Asmussen quickly won No. 701 with **Mia Mischief** in the \$120,100 Roxelana Overnight Stakes.

The leading owner standings are coming down to the wire with five-time Churchill Downs leading owner **Maggi Moss** holding a slim one-win lead over **Calumet Farm** and **Ken** and **Sarah Ramsey**, Churchill Downs’ all-time leading owners and holders of 31 Churchill Downs leading owner titles.

Twilight Thursday will have a first post of 5 p.m. and feature live music from the **Mama Said String Band** along with \$1 draft domestic beer and Blue Moon, food trucks, lawn games and handicapping advice from Racing 1.0. Friday and Saturday’s programs will have a first post of 12:45 p.m.

GETTING TO KNOW TRAINER PHIL BAUER – **Richard Rigney**’s red silks with three diagonal white hearts across the front and back are synonymous on the racetrack at Churchill Downs. One of the pivotal roles behind Rigney Racing is their trainer, 34-year-old Louisville-native **Phil Bauer**. The youngest of six children, Bauer graduated from St. Margaret Mary Grade School in 1999 and St. Xavier High School in 2003. Bauer, who is married with two young sons, began training in 2013. Bauer splits his year between his home in Jeffersonton, Ky., New Orleans and Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Q: What is your favorite thing to do on a day off?

A: Usually on my days off I love to spend with my wife Ashley and sons Phillip and Lincoln. When I’m not spending time with the family, I love to go hunting.

Q: How did you get started into horse racing?

A: Growing up, my grandparents had a horse farm and they used to race cheap claimers at River Downs. I loved spending time at their farm and going to the races. My sister used to babysit (owner) Richard Klein’s daughter and he got me my first job at the racetrack with (trainer) Steve Margolis. I then went to work for (trainer) Kenny McPeck at Saratoga and went out on my own with Richard in 2013.

Q: What horse (past or present) would have loved to train?

A: Rachel Alexandra - she was a monster.

Q: What is your favorite karaoke song?

A: I've only sang karaoke once and let's just say I don't remember what song I sang. If I had to do it again it would probably be something from Journey.

Q: What is your favorite place to take your family on a day off?

A: I took the kids to Kentucky Down Under the other day and they absolutely loved it.

Q: What is the worse excuse a jockey ever gave you after a poor ride?

A: "Sorry boss, I rode him like a camel." How am I supposed to get mad at them after saying something that?

Q: What is your favorite cocktail?

A: The best cocktail to have is a celebratory Fireball shot after winning a race.

Q: What is usually on TV when you get home from training?

A: My kids love to watch these wild animal documentaries.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who wants to become a trainer?

A: Don't let your emotions get the best of you. There are a lot of highs and a lot of lows in horse racing, especially if you're a trainer. If you stay even keeled, that will make your job a whole lot easier. Another thing is to appreciate your horses. They are the ones that give you success. Quality horses don't come around all the time. When you get one in your barn, make sure you appreciate that time.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Sunday's 10-race program features a \$285,126 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot in Races 5-10 and a \$3,955 carryover in the \$1 Super Hi-5 in Race 10. First post is 12:45 p.m. ... **Brian Hernandez Jr.** is four wins away from reaching 600 career victories at Churchill Downs.

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